

16 December 1986

## NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL

The National Intelligence Council (NIC) is that entity of the Director of Central Intelligence that prepares the nation's interagency National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), and that constitutes the most senior, authoritative analytical/estimative body within the US Intelligence Community. As such, the NIC continues a history of producing NIEs that was first established in 1950, and that, unbroken, has been continued by every Administration since that time.

Organizationally, the NIC is directly responsible to the DCI, and although its members sit at CIA Headquarters, it is an Intelligence Community--not a CIA--function. Furthermore, its members include not only CIA officers, but selected senior officers from the Department of State, Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency, the uniformed military services, academia, learned institutes, and the private sector. The NIC consists of a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, 16 National Intelligence Officers (of command, ambassadorial, or civil service super-grade rank), some 18 Assistant National Intelligence Officers, and an elite drafting staff of 12. Each NIO is the DCI's senior substantive officer for the Intelligence Community, for that NIO's portfolio: e.g., USSR, East Asia, Near East, Europe, Africa, Latin America, Strategic Programs (world nuclear weapons forces), General Purpose Forces, Soviet Denial and Deception, Counterterrorism and Narcotics, Economics, Science and Technology, and At Large.

The principal responsibilities of the NIOs are: (1) to provide the DCI or broker for the DCI the relevant answers to questions within that NIO's portfolio; (2) to direct and chair those National Intelligence Estimates that come within the NIO's given field; (3) to maintain active contact with the principal USG policymakers in the NIO's field, reflecting back to the NIC those questions where intelligence estimates can be most relevant; (4) to hold periodic warning meetings, where representatives of the Intelligence Community double-check available data, identify intelligence gaps, and provide guidance to intelligence collectors; (5) to represent the DCI in various interagency policy forums; (6) in chairing the coordination sessions with representatives from all the Intelligence Community, to assure that dissenting judgments are clearly and fully represented in the texts of the NIEs; (7) to prepare high-level briefing materials for the DCI, or themselves brief senior members of the Executive Branch and the Congress; and (8) to assure that the most rigorous standards of accuracy, objectivity, and presentation are maintained.

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Last year the NIC produced 86 NIEs; this year the number will be about 75. Some of these are programmed ahead of time by the NIC, guided by the NIOs' knowledge of the policymakers consumers' needs; although about half of the NIEs now being produced are fast-track studies, especially requested by the DCI or senior policymakers, usually to fit crisis or fast-moving situations.

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